

## 1992 Andover Master Plan

*Below is an excerpt from Andover's 1992 Master Plan. The entire Master Plan document is available for reference at the Memorial Hall Library or can be purchased at the Community Development and Planning Office located at the Andover Town Offices.*

### Goals and Objectives

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The goals and objectives outlined below are based on issues and recommendations discussed in previous planning studies, from residents' comments on the Planning Board's 1988 questionnaire and from issues identified at recent Master plan meetings. These statements have been organized into six categories to reflect the required contents of the Master Plan: Land Use, Housing, Economic Development, Natural and Cultural Resources, Open Space and Recreation, Services and Facilities, and Circulation.

The overall focus and objective of the Town's Master Plan is growth management. The goals and recommendations for each planning category presented below reinforce this objective, not as separate elements, but as a comprehensive set of guidelines, which support and strengthen one another.

A "Master Plan Goal" was developed to incorporate the general objectives of each planning element and to show this inter-relationship. The goals and objectives for each element follow.

#### **OVERALL MASTER PLAN GOAL**

The Town should seek to manage future growth in the Town to accommodate the rights of private property owners to develop their land while preserving the natural environment, town character and quality of life through enforcement of land development regulations and promotion of growth management controls to ensure a balance--between 'managed growth and the town's fiscal well-being. Specifically, the Town should continue to maintain a diversified tax base in order to provide an acceptable level of services and facilities for current and future citizens; to encourage a variety of housing to give citizens more choice and opportunities in how and where they would like to live; to support efforts for preserving the Town's natural resources; and to ensure that the transportation system sufficiently supports current and future growth.

#### **LAND USE GOALS - General**

*Issue: Manage future growth in the Town to accommodate the rights of private property owners to develop their land while preserving natural and cultural resources, as well as overall quality of life.*

**Goal #1: A balance of residential, commercial and industrial development is vital to the life of a community. The Town's Land Use Plan; through the expression of its recommendations in the Zoning By-law, Zoning Map, and Subdivision Rules and Regulations; should ensure that balanced growth occurs and that the health, safety, and welfare of the inhabitants of the Town of Andover are adequately addressed.**

#### **Objectives:**

**1.1** Examine potential future development that will detrimentally impact natural and cultural resources in the Town, particularly in view of the marginal nature of much of the remaining undeveloped land. Implement any additions to existing regulations determined to be necessary to protect these resources.

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**1.2** Examine existing and potential conflicts between land uses such as the provision of diversity in housing and the need for services or land uses currently prohibited or restricted by the Zoning By-law.

**1.3** Undertake a complete re-codification and revision of the Andover Zoning By-law to provide more clarity and definition in the regulations and to strengthen controls necessary for managing future growth taking into account the results of efforts undertaken to meet objectives 1.1 and 1.2 above.

**1.4** Computerize the building permit process and land use/zoning information to ensure the enforcement of local and state regulations, and to help with the future analyses of land use issues and proposed growth control measures.

### **LAND USE GOALS – *Central Business District***

*Issue: Size and Shape of the General Business Zoning District.*

#### **Goal #2: Anticipate and plan for the future of the Central area of Andover.**

##### **Objectives:**

**2.1** Develop as part of the overall Land Use Element of the Master Plan a focused study of the Central Andover Area that would include an examination of future land uses and zoning including the advisability of proposing a transitional zone adjacent to the General Business Zone. The plan would be based on public input, existing land use, as well as traffic patterns and geographical features.

**2.2** Develop a Central Business District Beautification Program, which would propose improvements to the streets, sidewalks, lighting, and other features of the Central Business District. The Plan should also address opportunities for participation in the development of these improvements by private landowners.

#### **Goal #3: Reinforce an efficient and compact Central Business District.**

##### **Objectives:**

**3.1** Encourage the highest and best use of upper story space and underutilized property in the General Business district (i.e. Lewis Street municipal property, Pearson Street).

**3.2** Minimize the intrusion of parking, traffic and commercial uses into residential areas adjacent to the business zone.

**3.3** Encourage a concentrated business district and not a "radial" pattern if the General Business district is expanded.

**3.4** Encourage pedestrian access to business areas by providing sidewalks and connections between abutting commercial properties.

**3.5** Evaluate all General Business rezoning proposals in the context of the following criteria:

- Proposals should be based on positive reasons instead of negative ones.
- Rezoning must be done in the context of meeting the goals and objectives which have been set forth for the CBD.
- Future zoning should not be done on a lot-by-lot basis. The character of the entire street should be identified and reinforced by zoning.
- Future rezoning must be done in a manner, which protects adjacent residential property.

*Issue: Design Standards*

**Goal #4: Improve the effectiveness, timeliness, and use by the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals of the existing design review standards and process.**

**Objectives:**

**4.1** A written policy should be developed cooperatively by the Design Advisory Group, Planning Board, ZBA, Community Development and Planning Staff, Town Manager, and the Board of Selectmen to implement the following changes in the process of Design Review:

- There should be more emphasis on meeting with applicants prior to the filing of a formal application to make them aware of the design review criteria and try to encourage compliance up front before tenant leases are made and a design locked in due to tenant requirements.
- Actual review by the Design Advisory Group should be done as close to the initial date of filing as possible and the results of the review should be available for the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals prior to their application. Another layer of formal review should not be added or the review process lengthened.
- An informational brochure or handbook similar in style to the Design Review Board Handbook used in Amherst, MA should be developed and provided to applicants, staff and boards.
- The membership of the Design Advisory Group should reflect the requirements of the Zoning By-law and include a nominee each from the Planning Board, the Historic Commission, and the Chamber of Commerce.

**4.2** Extending the current mandatory review by the Design Advisory Group for Special Permit Site Plan applications to smaller projects that only require administrative Site Plan Review should be considered by the Planning Board. The extension of mandatory review to include projects in the Industrial, Shopping Center, and Mixed Use zoning districts as well as the General Business Districts should also be considered.

*Issue: Adequacy of Parking Supply and Accessibility to Downtown*

**Goal #5: Promote the provision of adequate parking in the Central Business District.**

**Objectives:**

**5.1** Review the effect of the existing Zoning By-law on change in use of buildings and redevelopment in the CBD and propose appropriate changes if changes are found to be needed.

**5.2** Pursue the following programs to improve parking use in the downtown and promote a balance between floor space and supply of parking spaces:

- Increase level of parking enforcement through more frequent ticketing and possibly other measures such as increased fines or parking stickers but only as part of a comprehensive parking improvement program that provides additional parking or relocated parking for CBD employees and commuters parking in the CBD area.
- The assistance of at least the larger employers should be solicited to encourage employees to park in designated long-term spaces. This should be done in conjunction with an effort to develop more long-term parking and educate employees as to where it is through the development possibly in conjunction with downtown

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business groups of a brochure on available shopping, parking, and other services in the CBD.

**5.3** Develop a comprehensive parking program for supplying additional parking spaces for downtown businesses as well as addressing the needs of potential redevelopment in the existing CBD.

**5.4** Encourage site designs, which improve pedestrian and vehicular access in the CBD and study the possibility of providing incentives for this in the Zoning By-law.

**5.5** Encourage use of municipal parking and promote a cohesive identity and unified appearance for the CBD as a shopping area by developing a comprehensive parking signage scheme using the one in the 1987 VHB Parking Study as a guide.

### **LAND USE GOALS – *Industrial and Mixed Use Development***

#### **Goal #6: Manage industrial growth**

##### **Objectives:**

**6.1** Focus industrial growth within existing industrial zones instead of creating new industrial districts.

**6.2** Ensure that there is adequate infrastructure capacity (i.e. water, sewer, drainage, roads) to serve future development. During the Site Plan Review process require studies to evaluate the impacts on town services as well as to adjacent land uses.

**6.3** Protect the integrity of the Industrial Zoning Districts. Changes in the uses allowed in these areas and other requirements should be made only after careful study of the impact on the overall zone.

#### **Goal #7: Encourage mixed use development in locations where public services are available and current land uses reflect a transition from primarily obsolete and inappropriate uses to a mixture of uses.**

##### **Objectives:**

**7.1** Identify incentives and guidelines to encourage property owners to create mixed-use developments in the older industrial districts.

**7.2** Encourage a diversity of compatible land uses, such as office, multi-family and commercial.

**7.3** Encourage creative, adaptive reuse of existing sound building stock in the historical industrial sections of Andover such as Dundee Park, Shawsheen Village, Marland Mills and Ballardvale.

#### **Goal #8: Preserve aesthetic qualities**

##### **Objectives:**

**8.1** Encourage the preservation and restoration of existing structures of historic interest. Work with the Historical Commission on a community education program to explain the importance of preserving the historic mill areas.

**8.2** Promote Shawsheen River access to the public (both visual and physical). Encourage public walkways, easements or other measures as part of the site design to provide public access.

**8.3** Encourage the provision of open space and landscaped areas within developments.

**Goal #9: Improve site design**

**Objectives:**

**9.1** Strengthen the design standards for signs in the industrial and commercial areas. Refine zoning guidelines for off-premises signs to minimize the size and number of informational signs in the industrial parks and to ensure public safety.

**9.2** Encourage innovative site design through flexible design controls to enhance the natural features of the land.

**9.3** Create transitions, which protect adjacent residential properties, through buffering and limiting the location and design of large-scale developments.

**9.4** Provide safe pedestrian and vehicular circulation within the development and within the vicinity of the proposed project.

**Goal #10: Extend mandatory Design Advisory Group (DAG) project review to commercial and industrial projects outside of the General Business Zone.**

**Objectives:**

**10.1** Examine which projects and what additional zoning districts should be included in the DAG mandatory review.

**10.2** Develop criteria to be used by the DAG in reviewing projects in other zoning districts.

**10.3** Develop Zoning By-law amendment for Town Meeting action after review by the public, DAG, and Planning and other Town Boards.

## HOUSING GOALS

### *Issue: Elderly Housing*

**Goal #1:** The development of different housing opportunities for the elderly should be encouraged to accommodate their changing lifestyles and health care needs.

**Objectives:**

**1.1** Encourage affordable housing for the elderly through alternative residential programs such as life-care or congregate living; Evaluate different programs for providing elderly housing and amend the Zoning By-law to allow this type of development.

### *Issue: Preservation of Housing Resources*

**Goal #2:** The residential character of Andover's existing neighborhoods should be preserved and protected as much as possible by encouraging quality development which is compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and sensitive to the natural environment.

**Objectives:**

**2.1** Strengthen the buffering requirements for industrial development in the IG district to protect adjacent residential areas.

**2.2** Utilize natural areas as buffers between residential development and other uses. Encourage the preservation of significant vegetation through subdivision restrictions, site plan review and enforcement.

**2.4** Preserve significant historic structures for future housing sites where feasible by working with the Andover Historic Commission on proposed demolition projects. Consider developing regulations to encourage the preservation and replacement of housing units earmarked for demolition.

**2.5** Confine major commercial, office and industrial developments to specific locations to avoid intrusion into residential zones.

### *Issue: Diversity in Housing Opportunities*

**Goal #3** The Town should promote the development and maintenance of a variety of housing types, in terms of cost, ownership versus rental, and single family versus multi-family units.

**Objectives:**

**3.1** Provide more specific guidelines in the Zoning By-law for the conversion of existing residential units to multifamily housing and the expansion of existing multifamily structures.

**3.2** Consider amending the Zoning By-law to allow accessory apartments in order to provide smaller, more affordable rental units in owner-occupied, single family homes.

**3.3** Encourage adaptive re-use of existing buildings for future residential use. Consider the redevelopment of the Town's older industrial sites for a mixture of uses including lower cost housing for families and elderly.

### *Issue: Lower Cost Housing*

**Goal #4:** The Town should continue to respond to affordable housing needs.

**Objectives:**

- 4.1** Create zoning incentives to encourage low and moderate-income housing in multi-family developments and residential subdivisions.
- 4.2** Establish a Housing Trust Fund to assist with the development of lower cost housing for different income levels. Research funding programs available for assisting with affordable housing efforts.
- 4.3** Review the potential for developing lower density, "scattered site" affordable dwelling units sensitive to existing infrastructure capacities and neighborhood compatibility.
- 4.4** Support lower cost housing which is affordable in perpetuity. Explore methods for preventing the expiration of affordable units.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

**Goal #1: Encourage the development and sustainability of a diverse mix of commercial uses and services appropriate to the needs of the Town and economic conditions.**

**Objectives:**

- 1.1** Develop and make available the following information to assist new and existing businesses in the Central Business District (CBD) and other commercial centers in town:
  - Downtown Land Use and Business Inventory and other inventories for the commercial centers in Ballardvale and Shawsheen Square;
  - Real estate inventory to determine areas where redevelopment may occur, buildings and properties are underutilized, and pedestrian and vehicular access and circulation can be improved;
  - Market analysis and evaluation of downtown's competition to identify market opportunities;
  - Identification of businesses or services as part of groups that provide similar services (e.g. restaurants), complimentary services (e.g. shoe store and clothing store), or that have similar customer pools.
- 1.2** Encourage and support the efforts of the CBD Committee to sponsor promotional activities and encourage cooperation and communication between-Town Boards; officials, the business community and residents of the surrounding area.
- 1.3** Support retail and avoid an oversupply of office space in the General Business district.
- 1.4** Monitor land use, vacancy rates, and market pressures through frequent updates of information outlined above to ensure that development guidelines are sensitive to the Town's needs.

**Goal #2: Facilitate the redevelopment and growth of designated Industrial Zoning districts with high quality, environmentally sensitive, tax generating development.**

**Objectives:**

- 2.1** Work with appropriate local boards on the development of promotional pamphlets about Andover's industrial areas and community profile.

**2.2** Update land use, employment and vacancy data for the industrial sections of town and provide information to potential businesses.

**2.3** Review local land use and environmental regulations with prospective developers early in the development process.

**Goal #3: Guide and promote the adaptive reuse and redevelopment of the older mill buildings and industrial area to more productive and attractive uses while minimizing conflicts with residential areas and traffic congestion.**

**Objective:**

**3.1** Create incentives in the Zoning By-law to encourage mixed-use developments, which utilize upper-story space for housing and lower levels for retail space.

**Goal #4: Promote the continued economic health and vitality of the existing general business areas: Shawsheen Village, downtown, and Ballardvale as the main centers of retail and commercial activity in Town.**

**Objective:**

**4.1** Continue to concentrate future commercial development in current commercial zones through requirements of the Zoning By-law.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES AND CULTURAL GOALS – *Historic Preservation***

**Goal #1: Preserve, protect and develop the historical, architectural, and archeological assets of Andover.**

**Objectives:**

**1.1** Update the inventory of historic properties and consider establishing historic districts and an historic signage program.

**1.2** Promote heritage education in the community by initiating and/or coordinating programs, which promote public awareness of Andover's cultural resources.

**1.3** Coordinate governmental and community activities in order to manage Andover's cultural resources more efficiently. The Historical Commission should continue to promote working relationships with the Planning Board, Building Inspector, Conservation Commission and Design Advisory Group to ensure that the preservation of archeological, architectural, and historic assets is addressed in development review and construction process.

**1.4** Seek funding resources for historic rehabilitation and encourage public and private investment in preservation activities.

**1.5** Encourage a cooperative exchange of ideas and resources among various community groups and individuals interested in the continued preservation of Andover's historic properties.

## **NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES GOALS – *Water Quality***

**Goal #2: Reduce the impact of existing and future development on water quality to protect human health.**



**Objectives:**

- 2.1** Refine the Town's system for response to transportation related spills of hazardous materials. The Town should computerize the local emergency response program developed under the Superfund Reauthorization Act for responding to hazardous materials spills.
- 2.2** Enforce the Town's regulations for septic systems and encourage routine inspections, maintenance and replacement where needed.
- 2.3** Develop local regulations through the Fire Department or Health Division for controlling the underground storage of chemical tanks and other storage, use, or disposal of hazardous chemicals.
- 2.4** Coordinate and provide for scheduled monitoring of the Ledge Road landfill with the Department of Public Works and the Health Division.
- 2.5** Inspect and repair leaking sanitary sewers in accordance with the Master Sewer Plan and as provided for in the annual Capital Improvements Program.
- 2.6** During the development review process, encourage designs which minimize: (a) the contaminant level, volume and velocity of storm water runoff, and (b) the rate of erosion and sedimentation.
- 2.7** Develop information pamphlets about how residents can help protect the Town's drinking supply through less fertilizer use and water conservation methods.
- 2.8** Coordinate land management efforts of the Conservation Commission and AVIS to ensure better protection of the Town's water quality.
- 2.9** Develop water quality monitoring programs for the Merrimack River (near intake) and the Shawsheen River.

**NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES GOALS – *Conservation and Recreation***

**Goal #3: Preserve ecological balance**

**Objectives:**

- 3.1** Protect the remainder of the water supply watershed from harmful development by means of acquisition or special constraints on use.
- 3.2** Protect critical groundwater resources of the Town and abutting communities.
- 3.3** Continue strict enforcement of the Wetlands Protection Act.
- 3.4** Define more specifically the means of protecting open spaces and natural features in the Town's zoning and subdivision regulations.
- 3.5** Encourage the preservation of natural areas in and around industrial areas.
- 3.6** Explore the use of land conservation techniques to preserve open space while guiding appropriate development.

**Goal #4: Enhance the Town's natural features**

**Objectives:**

- 4.1** Identify, protect, and maintain outstanding natural features, endangered habitats, archaeologically important sites, and open spaces at critical locations.

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**4.2** Improve methods for designing subdivisions in order to preserve natural features as well as usable open space.

**4.3** Initiate and/or support open space maintenance programs which should be sponsored through the Conservation Commission, Department of Community Services and other departments responsible for implementation.

### **Goal #5: Protect river corridors**

#### **Objectives:**

**5.1** Acquire or protect by easement wherever possible the banks of major rivers, streams, and ponds of the Town.

**5.2** Establish and maintain trails along rivers where possible and plan for the utilization of accessible riverbanks.

### **Goal #6: Preserve farming**

#### **Objectives:**

**6.1** Encourage the few remaining active farmers to apply for federal and private programs designed to preserve Massachusetts' agriculture.

**6.2** Consider the establishment of a local or region-wide Farmers Market.

**6.3** Continue to encourage agricultural use of public land where appropriate and to promote the Town's Community Gardens program.

## **OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION GOALS**

### **Goal #1: Encourage open-space enjoyment and utilization**

#### **Objectives:**

**1.1** Publicize the Conservation and Recreation Plan and other informational material relative to available public open space and recreation programs.

**1.2** Continue to implement long-range plans for the Andover Recreation Park.

**1.3** Attempt to link open space areas by means of trails to establish a Town-wide trail system.

**1.4** Encourage appropriate open space uses while discouraging abuse.

**1.5** Support and encourage groups who use public open spaces appropriately and those who will voluntarily improve and enhance these areas.

### **Goal #2: Responsibility in regional relationships**

#### **Objective:**

**2.1** Communicate Andover's open space assets and goals regionally as well as locally through the Town's involvement with the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission and regional environmental groups.

### **Goal #3: Make good use of scarce resources**

#### **Objectives:**

**3.1** Continue to facilitate the sharing of open space and recreation areas among the different agencies of the Town.

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**3.2** Maintain and improve working relationships of Town agencies with other holders and managers of open space and active recreation facilities.

**3.3** Acquire open space in neighborhoods where it is lacking or limited.

**3.4** Identify deficiencies in outdoor recreation opportunities and develop strategies to correct them.

**3.5** Provide opportunities for the enjoyment of open space by all groups and ages.

### **Goal #4: Provide better management of existing areas**

#### **Objectives:**

**4.1** Improve the maintenance program for the Town's active recreation areas.

**4.2** Establish a maintenance fund for limited care of reservations and Community Services facilities.

**4.3** Provide proper signs to identify conservation and recreation areas and to control uses.

**4.4** Continue efforts to develop better management strategies using volunteers wherever possible.

**4.5** Be alert to abuses such as litter and vandalism and to employ appropriate enforcement techniques.

**4.6** Balance uses in order to provide maximum enjoyment of open space areas.

**4.7** Inform users of the Town's open space of their responsibility for its proper management.

## **SERVICE AND FACILITIES GOALS - Schools**

**Goal #1 Provide and maintain, in sound condition, the physical plant necessary to carry out the requirements of the school system.**

**Objective:**

**1.1** Funds approved at the 1988 Town Meeting paid for a comprehensive assessment of the condition of school buildings and grounds as recommended under Phase I of the School Master Plan.

**Goal #2: Equip and adequately furnish all school buildings and provide the staff with the resources to accomplish the goals of the school system.**

**Objective:**

**2.1** Determine system-wide school equipment requirements and conduct a physical inventory of all school equipment. A Centralized Asset Inventory Control System could assist with maintaining inventory control and establishing a schedule for acquiring equipment.

## **CIRCULATION GOALS**

**Goal #1: An efficient and balanced transportation system**

**Objectives:**

**1.1** Conduct a town-wide study of roadway safety for motorized vehicles and bicycles, to include road capacity deficiencies, traffic control and volumes, and traffic circulation as the second phase of the Town's Master Road Plan. Utilize road inventories and analyses conducted by the Department of Public Works as a basis for determining future-roadway improvements to-be incorporated into the Town's Capital Improvements Program, (amended 9-14-93).

**1.2** Work with the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority and the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission on improving commuter rail and bus service to Boston and the region. Pursue the feasibility of developing additional park-and-ride lots in conjunction with regional commuter programs being studied by the MVPC. Develop programs to encourage bicycling to commuter rail stations and bus Stops, (amended 9-14-93).

**1.3** Evaluate the feasibility of undertaking roadway improvements recommended in various traffic impact and access studies conducted from 1986 - 1988 for the development of specific projects.

**1.4** Encourage vanpooling and other alternative transportation services to discourage dependence on automobiles in the industrial parks, and larger commercial areas. Undertake a community-wide education program to promote the use of mass transit services and other feasible alternatives to using automobiles.

**1.5** Promote a safe, bicycle-friendly transportation system that encourages frequent use by commuters, students, and other residents going to schools, commercial districts, and to recreational areas (Amended 9-14-93).

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*The Planning Board adopted the Andover Master Plan on March 24, 1992. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires that all communities have a master plan that is designed to provide a basis for decision-making regarding the long-term physical development of the community. The plan is to contain the following: a Goals and Policies Statement, a Land Use Plan Element, a Housing Element, an Economic Development Element, a Natural and Cultural References Element, a Services and Facilities Element, a Circulation Element, and an Implementation Element.*

*Please note that this is a working document and that several of the objectives are complete and others are ongoing.*

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